

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

*Please amend the claims as follows:*

1. *(original)* A method for distributing configuration information in an xDSL network that comprises network elements on certain hierarchical levels and a network managing station, the method comprising the steps of:

- transmitting a request for configuration information from a first network element located on a first hierarchical level to a second network element located on a second hierarchical level, which second hierarchical level is above the first hierarchical level in the xDSL network but which second network element is other than the network managing station,
- deciding, at the second network element that is other than the network managing station, whether it is appropriate to read the configuration information requested in the request for configuration information from a configuration memory of the second network element, and
- in case it is decided to be appropriate,
  - reading the configuration information requested in the request for configuration information from a configuration memory of the second network element and
  - transmitting the configuration information that was read from the configuration memory of the second network element to the first network element.

2. *(previously presented)* A method for distributing configuration information in an xDSL network that comprises network elements on certain hierarchical levels and a network managing station, the method comprising the steps of:

- transmitting a request for configuration information from a first network element located on a first hierarchical level to a second network element located on a second hierarchical level, which second hierarchical level is above the first hierarchical level in

the xDSL network but which second network element is other than the network managing station,

- as a response to receiving a request for configuration information from the first network element, the second network element forwards the request to a third network element located on a third hierarchical level, which third hierarchical level is above the second hierarchical level in the xDSL network;
- the second network element examines whether a response is received from the third network element; and
- the second network element decides it is appropriate to read the configuration information requested in the request for configuration information from a configuration memory of the second network element if the response is not received from the third network element; and if it is appropriate for the second network element to read configuration information, the second network element:
  - reads the configuration information requested in the request for configuration information from a configuration memory of the second network element, and
  - transmits the configuration information that was read from the configuration memory of the second network element to the first network element.

3. *(original)* A method according to claim 2, wherein at the second network element it is decided to be appropriate to read the configuration information requested in the request for configuration information from a configuration memory of the second network element if a response is not received from the third network element before the end of a certain time limit.

4. *(original)* A method according to claim 2, comprising the steps of:

- in a case where a response is received from the third network element, storing a piece of configuration information contained in the response at the configuration memory of the second network element and
- forwarding a copy of the stored configuration information from the second network element to the first network element.

5. *(original)* A method according to claim 1, comprising the step of:

- as a response to receiving a request for configuration information from the first network element, applying a certain predefined rule at the second network element to decide, whether to forward the request from the second network element to a third network element located on a third hierarchical level, which third hierarchical level is above the second hierarchical level in the xDSL network, or whether to read the configuration information requested in the request for configuration information from a configuration memory of the second network element without forwarding the request from the second network element to the third network element.

6. *(previously presented)* A method for distributing configuration information in an xDSL network that comprises network elements on certain hierarchical levels and a network managing station, the method comprising the steps of:

- transmitting a request for configuration information from a first network element located on a first hierarchical level to a second network element located on a second hierarchical level, which second hierarchical level is above the first hierarchical level in the xDSL network but which second network element is other than the network managing station,
- deciding, at the second network element that is other than the network managing station, whether it is appropriate to read the configuration information requested in the request for configuration information from a configuration memory of the second network element, and
- in case it is decided to be appropriate,
  - reading the configuration information requested in the request for configuration information from a configuration memory of the second network element and
  - transmitting the configuration information that was read from the configuration memory of the second network element to the first network element and

- as a response to receiving a request for configuration information from the first network element, applying a certain predefined rule at the second network element to decide, whether to forward the request from the second network element to a third network element located on a third hierarchical level, which third hierarchical level is above the second hierarchical level in the xDSL network, or whether to read the configuration information requested in the request for configuration information from a configuration memory of the second network element without forwarding the request from the second network element to the third network element,
- wherein the step of applying a certain predefined rule at the second network element to decide, whether to forward the request from the second network element to decide, whether to forward the request from the second network element to a third network, comprises a step of examining, whether the configuration information stored at the configuration memory of the second network element is older than a predefined time limit, so that the configuration information requested in the request for configuration information is read from a configuration memory of the second network element if it is found to be not older than a certain time limit.

7. *(previously presented)* A method for achieving configuration information into a network element of an xDSL network that comprises network elements on certain hierarchical levels, the method comprising the steps of:

- transmitting a request for configuration information from a first network element located on a first hierarchical level towards a second network element located on a second hierarchical level, which second hierarchical level is above the first hierarchical level in the xDSL network, said second hierarchical level being at least more than one level higher than the first hierarchical level if the second network element is a network managing station associated with said xDSL network,
- deciding, at the second network element, whether it is appropriate to read the configuration information requested in the request for configuration information from a configuration memory of the second network element, and
- in case it is decided to be appropriate,

- reading the configuration information requested in the request for configuration information from a configuration memory of the second network element and if said second network element is the network managing station, communicating the configuration information to the first network element through a node at a hierarchical level between said second hierarchical level and said first hierarchical level.

8. *(previously presented)* A method for achieving configuration information into a network element of an xDSL network that comprises network elements on certain hierarchical levels, the method comprising the steps of:

- transmitting a request for configuration information from a first network element located on a first hierarchical level towards a second network element located on a second hierarchical level, which second hierarchical level is above the first hierarchical level in the xDSL network,
- the first network element decides it is appropriate to read the configuration information requested in the request for configuration information from a configuration memory of the first network element if a response is not received from the second network element before the end of a certain time limit; and if it is appropriate for the first network element to read configuration information, the first network element:
- reads the configuration information requested in the request for configuration information from a configuration memory of the first network element.

9. *(canceled)*

10. *(currently amended)* A method according to claim 9, additionally comprising the steps of for effecting changes into configuration information in an xDSL network that comprises network elements on certain hierarchical levels and a network managing station, the method comprising:

- at a certain first network element that is other than the network managing station and is located on a certain first hierarchical level, receiving a command for changing a piece of configuration information that pertains to a second network element that is

located on a certain second hierarchical level, which second hierarchical level is below the first hierarchical level in the xDSL network,

- storing said piece of configuration information at a configuration memory of the first network element in a form that results from executing said received command,

- transmitting a copy of the stored configuration information from said first network element towards said second network element as a command to start using the transmitted configuration information and

- transmitting a copy of the stored configuration information from said first network element towards the network managing station as a report of changed configuration information.

11. *(previously presented)* A method for effecting changes into configuration information in an xDSL network that comprises network elements on certain hierarchical levels and a network managing station, the method comprising the steps of:

- at a certain first network element that is other than the network managing station and is located on a certain first hierarchical level, receiving a command for changing a piece of configuration information that pertains to a second network element that is located on a certain second hierarchical level, which second hierarchical level is below the first hierarchical level in the xDSL network and

- storing said piece of configuration information at a configuration memory of the first network element in a form that results from executing said received command,

- transmitting a copy of the stored configuration information from said first network element towards said second network element as a command to start using the transmitted configuration information and

- transmitting a copy of the stored configuration information from said first network element towards the network managing station as a report of changed configuration information.

- as a response to the reception of a report or command containing changed configuration information, checking at a third network element, which in the xDSL

network is on another hierarchical level than said first hierarchical level, whether an effected change in the changed configuration information is in accordance with a certain required authorisation for making such a change, and

- storing at a configuration memory of said third network element, reported changed configuration information only if all effected changes in the changed configuration information were found to be in accordance with certain required authorisations for making such changes.

12. *(canceled)*

13. *(canceled)*